

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, ten years ago, on March 15, 1989, President Bush hailed the creation of the new Department of Veterans Affairs by saying, "There is only one place for the veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America." Ten years ago today, veterans took their rightful place at the highest executive level of Federal Government. The Department of Veterans Affairs Act, passed the previous October by the 100th Congress, was implemented and the new Department of Veterans Affairs became a reality. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs became the 14th member of the President's cabinet.

While the United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world, it was not until 10 years ago that our Nation's veterans received the hard earned recognition provided them by the creation of a cabinet level department. It is also somewhat ironic that veterans waited so long for the establishment of a cabinet level department as the foundation for the Department of Veterans Affairs was established some 350 years earlier in 1636, when the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony, who were at war with the Pequot Indians, approved a measure stating that disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony.

The establishment of the Department of Veterans Affairs fulfilled this Nation's promise to those who had risked it all to preserve, protect and defend by giving them direct representation before the Nation's chief executive. As Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee at the time the legislation passed, said, "We didn't make the government bigger, we gave our veterans a bigger voice in government."

Rep. Gerald Solomon, ranking minority member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs at the time, said, "The change directly supported Congress's and the President's effort to rebuild the military. A strong VA and strong veterans' benefits programs are the underpinning of a viable all-volunteer military force. We understood that then, and we understand it now."

After becoming a cabinet level department in 1989, VA began to grow, not in size, but in importance, operating as an equal to other departments. As a department, VA has played a major, if not the lead, role in issues that have dominated our national agenda—homelessness, health care management, government reinvention and reengineering, AIDS, workplace diversity and medical research to name a few.

As a cabinet department, VA has successfully embarked on bold initiatives to reinvent

the veterans' benefits delivery process and re-engineer the nation's largest hospital-based health care system into a patient-focused health network delivering a uniform package of health maintenance services to more veterans in more locations than ever before. VA is today undergoing an evolution like never before in its history with the goal of continuing to provide better service to our Nation's veterans, their survivors and dependents.

As a cabinet level department of federal government, VA is well positioned to fulfill the Nation's promise to its veterans well into the 21st century and to give renewed meaning to Lincoln's call for this nation "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." We expect and will accept no less.

HONORING MARIE JOSSE L. MONTROSE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Marie J. Montrose, for her exemplary community service, and for her numerous contributions to the Brooklyn community.

Ms. Marie J. Montrose is the Director of Community and Patient Relations at Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. In that capacity, she is responsible for Community Affairs, Patient Relations, Pastoral Care and Volunteers Services. Ms. Montrose is Interfaith's liaison with community organizations, agencies, churches, schools and other groups that are interested in working together with the institution to continue to improve the health of residents of the Central Brooklyn community.

Ms. Marie J. Montrose has implemented several new programs at the hospital: The Dr. Martin Luther King—the African American Celebration Day, Employee Honor Roll, Employee Satisfaction Survey, Random Act of Kindness Day, the Annual Memorial Service for deceased employees, the Summer Youth Employment Program and the hospital-wide Customer Relations training program. Last September, she directed the activities for the groundbreaking ceremony of "Interfaith, A New Beginning".

A native of Haiti, Ms. Montrose is a long time resident of Brooklyn. She is also a proud parent. Her daughter Sarah Anne gives her the inspiration to lecture and write extensively on health care advocacy and children issues. Her thesis "Who are the Children and How is their Health?" was published in the book "The Multicultural Challenge in Health Education" in 1996. Her latest projects "The Economics of Health and the Immigrant"—"The Patient and Managed Care—Whose Right Is It Anyway?" were accepted for publication.

Ms. Montrose is an active member of national, state, and local organizations. She serves on several local boards dedicated to

improving health care: AMBA Executives, New York Society of Health Care Advocacy, National Society for Consumer Affairs, Visions Services for the Blind, American Public Health Association, and the Ryan White Advisory Committee. With all of her activities Ms. Montrose still finds time to volunteer as a teacher for newly emigrated teenagers.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ms. Marie J. Montrose who has helped the community, and has served as an excellent role model.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 37 on March 10, 1999, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 42) regarding the use of United States Armed Forces as part of a NATO peacekeeping operation implementing a Kosovo peace agreement:

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in strong opposition to the deployment of U.S. ground forces in Kosovo. I base my opposition on three principles: first, that the administration must abide by U.S. law in the event of a deployment; second, that the Kosovo issue represents a threat primarily to European, rather than American interests; and third, that intervention in Kosovo at this time would set a dangerous precedent for NATO and the U.S. armed forces by providing military support to an independence movement within a sovereign nation—a far different mission than that currently underway on the Balkan Peninsula.

With particular regard to the administration's legal obligation, I believe it critical for the President to abide by last year's defense authorization measure (P. Law 105-262), which the President signed into law. This law requires that before American troops are deployed to Kosovo, the President must (1) certify that the presence of U.S. forces in Kosovo is necessary to the national security interests of the United States; (2) provide the reasoning behind this certification; (3) report the number of American men and women who will be deployed; (4) establish the mission and objectives of U.S. forces in Kosovo; (5) detail the

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